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For Immediate Release

## ***Province and Portage College pledge support to Vegreville CPC Campaign***

*Vegreville* - New housing options, additional local post-secondary programming, and provincial support for recruiting workers to the community are three new initiatives in a plan from the Town of Vegreville to directly address the challenges the federal government has suggested impacted operations at the Case Processing Centre (CPC).

The town's strategic response to the CPC closure includes three key initiatives:

- Additional rental housing – changing the town's land use bylaw to allow a local hotel to convert rooms into apartments (bachelor, one bedroom and two bedrooms);
- Post-secondary training options – Portage College has committed to providing broader access to post secondary training for skill enhancement of the local workforce; and
- Workforce recruitment – the Alberta Government has committed to enhance local recruitment efforts to assist the federal government with filling key positions.

When the federal government originally announced last October it would close the CPC and move up to 280 jobs to Edmonton Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada officials cited several reasons for the move including:

- Relocating the office to Canada Place would save taxpayers money;
- Difficulty recruiting staff to fill positions;
- Vegreville did not have adequate housing options for staff;
- Inadequate access to post-secondary training facilities; and
- A requirement that public transit be available for staff.

"After 24 years successfully operating in the community we were surprised to hear that there were any concerns," said Mayor Myron Hayduk. "Since February, the federal government has refused to discuss any solutions so Council has taken the initiative over the past few months and developed a plan with partners who want to work with our community."

Alberta Minister of Labour Christina Gray added, "Our government remains deeply disappointed in the federal government's decision to close the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, with no regard to the impact on these committed staff and the community as a whole. We are ready and willing to support the Town of Vegreville in its efforts to keep this centre open by helping with the attraction and recruitment of staff. I encourage all Albertans who are concerned about the relocation of this centre to continue calling, writing and voicing your concerns to the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship."

While details for each initiative still need to be worked out, the town is pleased that the Government of Alberta, Portage College, and local developers have stepped up to help the community.

“Our strength has always been our ability to pull together in the face of adversity,” said Mayor Hayduk. “I am proud of this community. We are proving that you can knock us down but we will get right back up and won’t stop fighting.”

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***Background Documents:***

<http://www.stopcpcclosure.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Government-of-Alberta-Letter-of-Support-20170627.pdf>

<http://www.stopcpcclosure.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Portage-College-Letter-of-Support-20170615.pdf>

<http://www.stopcpcclosure.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Vegreville-Council-Minutes-Land-Use-Bylaw-Amendment-20170612.pdf>

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